

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At the Meeting of the  
**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen,  
Witney, on Wednesday 3 September 2014 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillors: N A MacRae MBE (Chairman), Mrs M J Crossland (Vice Chairman), A J Adams, Mrs J C Baker, M A Barrett, A C Beaney, R J M Bishop, M Brennan, Mrs L J Chapman, A S Coles, Mrs E M Coles, N G Colston, J C Cooper, D A Cotterill, C Cottrell-Dormer, R A Courts, H G Davies, C G Dingwall, P J G Dorward, Mrs J M Doughty, P Emery, D S T Enright, J Haine, A D Harvey, S J Hoare, H J Howard, E H James, P D Kelland, Ms E P R Leffman, Mrs L E C Little, J F Mills, T J Morris, B J Norton, Dr E M E Poskitt, A H K Postan, W D Robinson, G Saul, T B Simcox and D A Snow

14. MRS EILEEN YOUNG

The Chairman advised Members of the death of Mrs Eileen Young who was elected to the Council in 1979 and represented the Witney South Ward until 1987.

During her time on the Council Mrs Young served on the Public Health, Recreation, Housing Management, Policy and Co-Ordinating and Finance and General Purposes Committee as well as the Personnel Sub-Committee. Mrs Young also represented the Council on the RAF Liaison Committee and Witney Traffic Advisory Committee.

Mrs Young also served on Witney Town Council and was Mayor from 1984 to 1986.

All those present at the meeting then stood in silence in memory of Mrs Young.

15. MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 June 2014, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M R Booty, Mrs L C Carter, Mr H B Eaglestone, Mrs E H N Fenton, Mr S J Good, Mr P J Handley, Mr R A Langridge, Mr R D J McFarlane and Mr T N Owen.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

18. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

18.1 Councillor Neil Owen

Mr MacRae reported that Mr Owen had suffered a fall at home and had broken a number of ribs. Mr MacRae advised that he had been in contact with Mr Owen and sent a small gift on behalf of the council.

18.2 Development Control Committee Site Visit

Mr Robinson reminded members that a site visit to the two Carterton sites was to be held on Thursday 18 September 2014 and would commence at 1.30pm at the Woodgreen Offices. Mr Robinson requested that Development Control Committee members advise

Keith Butler as to whether they would be attending. The planning applications would be considered by the Development Control Committee in October.

Mr Robinson acknowledged that a number of members had visited the sites on a previous occasion but suggested that it would nonetheless be beneficial for members to attend if possible.

### 18.3 Lock Keepers Cottages

Mr Harvey reminded members that at the Council meeting held on 14 May 2014 a Notice of Motion had been supported in the following terms:

“This Council believes resident lock keepers play an important role in the life of and safety on the River Thames and calls upon the Environment Agency to retain the present system of lock keepers, in particular along the remote stretch of the river Thames which forms the southern boundary of our district and includes the locks at Buscot, Grafton, Radcot, Rushey, Shifford, Northmoor, Pinkhill and Eynsham”

Mr Harvey reported that a response had been received from the Environment Agency. The letter indicated that the Environment Agency had always managed the river with a combination of resident keepers who live on site in a property provided free of charge and relief keepers who live off site. The latter are needed to cover days when the resident keeper is not available. On sites where the house is rented relief keepers attend the lock during duty hours and manage the lock and weir.

Mr Harvey advised that the number of houses let to private tenants by the Environment Agency had been frozen for two years. A study had been undertaken comparing the financial and operational management of sites with and without a resident lock keeper. The report would be submitted for consideration in due course but in the meantime no further lock keeper houses would be rented out.

Mr Harvey asked members to advise him if they became aware of any further issues. Mr Kelland indicated that he had been told that some locks did not have a keeper available on occasions and some cottages were being sold.

### 19. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

No submissions were received from the public in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

### 20. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The Council considered an updated report, circulated at the meeting, setting out recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Council's Committees from 18 June to 20 August 2014.

The recommendations were proposed by Mr Norton and seconded by Mr Hoare and on being put to the vote were carried.

**RESOLVED:** that the recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Council's Committees from 18 June to 20 August 2014 be approved in relation to:

- (a) Review of the Localism Act 2011 Community Right to Bid and Approval of a Revised Scheme of Delegation (Minute No. CT/6/2014/2015); and
- (b) 2013/2014 Outturn Financial and Performance Report (Minute No. CT/9/2014/2015)

### 21. REPORTS OF THE CABINET AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

The reports of the meetings of the Cabinet and the Council's Committees held between 18 June and 20 August 2014 were received:

21.1 Review of Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places  
(Minute No. A&GP 11/2014/2015)

Mr Mills advised that he had a matter to raise in respect of the minute and he would do this at the next scheduled meeting of the Audit and General Purposes Committee.

21.2 Call-in of Cabinet Decision – West Oxfordshire Local Plan Housing Consultation  
(Minute No. E&S 19/2014/2015)

Mr Cooper indicated that he considered the responses that had been given at the meeting in respect of infrastructure in Woodstock, a buffer zone for Blenheim and the levels of discounted land had not been detailed enough.

The Chairman advised that this was not an opportunity to reconsider matters and was for questions only.

Mr Robinson, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, reminded members that the proposals were out for consultation and issues could be raised through that process.

Mr Snow raised concern about the proposals for North Witney and Mr MacRae reiterated that it was a matter for the consultation process.

22. UPDATE TO COUNCIL PLAN 2012-2015

Consideration was given to the report of the Joint Head of Business Information and Change Service seeking consideration of an update to the Council Plan 2012-2015.

Mr Norton introduced the report and clarified that this was the final update on the current plan and a new one would be produced following the elections in May 2015.

Mr Norton then proposed that the update be adopted. Mr Hoare seconded the proposal.

Mr Enright asked about the process for a new plan and where members would have the opportunity for input. The Chief Executive advised that relevant data would be analysed and a timetable presented to Cabinet in due course. As in previous years it was likely that there would be input from the scrutiny committees and the final decision would rest with Council.

On being put to the vote the proposition was carried.

**RESOLVED:** That the 2014/2015 update to the 2012-2015 Council Plan be adopted.

23. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS – AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES

The report of the Head of Democratic Services seeking approval for arrangements for the sealing of documents between 22 September and 8 October 2014, inclusive; and a change to Article 14 of the Constitution to provide cover for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council in the future, if necessary was received.

The Chairman had consented to this additional item being considered in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.

Mr Norton advised that this was a housekeeping issue and proposed that recommendation (a) in the report be deleted and recommendation (b) be approved as this would be sufficient to cover any future occurrences. Mr Hoare seconded the proposal.

Mr Enright questioned whether Council should elect somebody to undertake the role. The Chief Executive clarified that the proposal would give him authority to seek a councillor to act as authorised signatory.

Mr MacRae explained that both he and the Vice-Chairman had made their holiday arrangements some time ago before they had been elected as Chairman and Vice-

Chairman. It was unfortunate that the clash of dates had occurred. Mr Cooper expressed his support for the recommendation.

On being put to the vote the proposition was carried.

**RESOLVED:** That, Paragraph 14.7 of Article 14 of the Council's Constitution be amended by the addition of the following final sentence: "In the event of neither the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Council being available to attest the affixing of the Common Seal, the Chief Executive is authorised to arrange for the sealing to be undertaken by another member of the Council".

24. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The Council received and noted the report of the Chief Executive which gave details of documents numbered 10999 to 11022B sealed since the last meeting.

The meeting closed at 2.25pm

CHAIRMAN